

Adaptation of *Magruder's 2005 American Government*

Class Notes

Baldwin County High School

Bay Minette, Alabama

**Ratifying the Constitution**

**1. After the Constiutional Convention sent the *proposed constitution* to the 13 states, what issue was very open?**

It was an open question as to whether enough States (a minimum of 9 was needed) would **ratify** (approve) the proposed constitution.

**2. What happened on September 28, 1787?**

The Congress sent out copies of the proposed constitution to the various States.

**3. In an interesting twist of logic, what did the unapproved *U.S. Constitution* require of the States for the *U.S. Constitution* to become ratified?**

Article VII of the *U.S. Constitution* requires that at least nine States must have their respective ratifying conventions to approve the *U.S. Constitution* for it to become enacted (ratified) and binding on the particular states who chose to ratify it.

**4. In the debate over ratification that followed, what two major groups emerged?**

The **Federalists** who supported ratification versus the **Anti-Federalists** who opposed ratification

**5. Who were two important leaders of the Federalists?**

James Madison and Alexander Hamilton

Both of these men attended the Constitutional Convention.

**6. Who were some of the most important Anti-Federalists?**

Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, John Hancock, Samuel Adams

These men had been important figures in the American Revolution.

**7. James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay wrote a series of pro-ratification articles that became known as what?**

*The Federalist Papers*

These articles provide a great deal of insight into the mentalities behind the creation of the *U.S. Constitution*. Even today, they provide help in interpreting the Constitution.

*The Federalist Papers* were part of the drama in New York's battle over ratification

**8. What was a key claim of the Federalists?**

They felt that the *Articles of Confederation* had largely failed, and thus a new constitution was necessary

## 9. What were some of the arguments made by the Anti-Federalists against the proposed constitution?

Some did not like the ratification process itself.

Some objected to a lack of mentioning God (There actually is an oblique reference to God at the end of the document in terms of the date. It utilizes the customary “in the Year of our Lord” label relative to the year 1787).

Some did not like the prohibition against States printing money.

Some believed the national government under the *U.S. Constitution* would be too powerful.

Some complained of the absence of a **bill of rights**.

Patrick Henry of Virginia saw the proposed constitution as very dangerous.

**10. What State was the first to ratify?**

Delaware on December 7, 1787

**11. What were the next eight states to ratify?**

Pennsylvania

New Jersey

Georgia

Connecticut

Massachusetts

Maryland

South Carolina

New Hampshire

**12. On what date did New Hampshire ratify the *U.S. Constitution*, thus becoming the 9th State to do so?**

June 21, 1788

**13. Why were the ratifications of those nine states probably not sufficient to make the *U.S. Constitution* a practical success?**

Neither **Virginia** nor **New York** had yet ratified, and thus the *U.S. Constitution* was **NOT** binding on them. Without these states in the Union, the nation would be cut into pieces, segmented (discontiguous) if you will.

At that point in American history, it was preferable that all the states be **contiguous** with one another. Also, both Virginia and New York were among the largest of states, both in terms of **territory** and **population**.

**14. What became of Virginia, in terms of ratification?**

In a close vote at the Virginia ratifying convention, **ratification passed by a vote of 89 to 79** on June 25, 1788.

**15. What became of New York, in terms of ratification?**

On July 26, 1788 New York voted for ratification by an extremely close margin of **30 to 27**, thus becoming the 11th State to ratify the *U.S. Constitution*.

**16. What two states still had not ratified the *U.S. Constitution*?**

North Carolina and Rhode Island.

**North Carolina** would not ratify until November 21, 1789, nearly seven months after George Washington became President of the United States. **Rhode Island** did not ratify the until May 29, 1790 (by a two vote margin), over a year after Washington became President (April 30, 1789).



### 17. What happened on September 13, 1788?

Congress (Still under the *Articles of Confederation*) chose New York City as the nation's first capital city. It also set up an election schedule to choose the new government under the *U.S. Constitution*.

### 18. What happened on March 4, 1789?

The new Congress under the *United States Constitution* convened at Federal Hall in New York City.

### 19. What happened on April 6, 1789?

The new Congress counted electoral votes in the Presidential election, a contest easily won by Virginia's **George Washington**

### 20. What happened on April 30, 1789?

George Washington of Virginia was inaugurated (sworn in) as the first **President of the United States of America**.